THE CROSBY VOICE

Issue No.12
February, 1980.

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
Registered for posting as a periodical - Category B.

Hello again,

Well, here we are with our first major newsletter for a new year and a new decade. I hope that you all had a happy Chrsitmas and that 1980 is turning out to be a good year for you.

We have a number of items of interest for you in the newsletter including perhaps the best photo pages we've yet had. These include our new cover, a 1931 advertisement for one of Bing's Mack Sennett comedies and a reproduction of parts of a page of the 'Bingville Bugle' from October 10th, 1910! In case you're wondering what place the last mentioned item has in this journal, it would very likely seem to be the source of Harry Lillis Crosby's nickname 'Bing'. Probably you know already that Bing was addicted to this publication as a boy, in fact, so addicted that his friends named him 'Bingo from Bingville'. After a time, the 'o' was dropped and the 'Bing' stayed...and stayed...and stayed.

I hope that you can read the words of the Bingville Bugle. They've become a little frayed with the passage of time and although we've tried to clean them up a little, some of the finer type may still be hard to read. Nonetheless, I'm sure you'll find it fascinating to see an actual page of a humour sheet that Bing most probably read almost seventy years ago! Thanks to Ken Twiss of the Bing Crosby Historical Society who supplied us with this rare item.

Souvenir Sheets

At our last film evening on Monday February 11th, all those attended received the first of what we hope will be a regular series of printed souvenir sheets featuring stills from the movie, cast details, production dates, story synopsis, etc. These sheets will only be available to people who attend the film nights although country, interstate and overseas members will find copies enclosed with their newsletters as consolation for not being able to attend.

Crosby at Christmas

It was certainly a great Crosby Christmas on our TV sets. The last Christmas special, The Crosby Years, Holiday Inn,

and 'Bing Crosby - his life and legend'. Unfortunately, for yours truly, it was a very frustrating time in that I went away on holiday the day after the repeat of the last Christmas special and missed everything else!!!

Getting back to movies for a moment, the coming year should see some really great films screened by the society. These include "Emperor Waltz", "East Side of Heaven" and the 1936 version of "Anything Goes" (Shown under its TV title of 'Tops is the limit').

In addition, we'll be screening a selection of fascinating (although non-Crosby) supports including Rudy Vallee in the 1929 film 'Vagabond Lover' and the 1930 DeSilva Brown and Henderson science fiction musical 'Just Imagine'.

This seems like a logical place to get onto our forthcoming Future Functions.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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MONDAY MARCH 31ST - **FILM** EVENING - THE BATTLE OF THE CROONERS - BING CROSBY VS RUDY VALLEE - 7.30 SHARP!

Due to the great success of our last film evening (see Past Functions) we have decided to schedule another film evening straight away. In answer to many requests, we'll be re-screening a movie we first showed about two years ago. Bing's 1936 'Pennies from Heaven' featuring Louis Armstrong. If you missed this movie first time around (or even if you saw it), don't miss this opportunity to see this milestone in the Crosby career. There's loads of great music and even a reasonable story.

PLUS

The one and only Rudy Vallee in his 1929 film debut: "The Vagabond Lover". A film of which the highly regarded magazine of the period, Photoplay, said "The king of song has one facial expression". Anwell, at least I'm told that the film has six great songs. At all events it should be interesting to compare the early Rudy Vallee

with the early Bing Crosby.

PLEASE BE ON TIME FOR THIS SCREENING. AS WE ONLY HAVE THE MOBIL CENTRE FOR 3 HOURS AND AS THERE ARE TWO FULL LENGTH FEATURES TO GET THROUGH, THE SCREENING WILL COMMENCE AT PRECISELY 7.30 PM! SO PLAN TO GET THERE BY 7.15 IF YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the Mobil Building, 2 City Road, South Melbourne.

Admission (including supper):

Members: $2
Families: $5
Pensioners: $1
Non-members: $3

(N.B. This function was originally set for April 7th, Easter Monday. Not the best of dates!)

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OTHER FUTURE FUNCTIONS: At this stage, we are considering amending our schedule slightly to include two or three more functions than planned last year. You will receive details of these changes in plenty of time.

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PAST FUNCTIONS

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SUNDAY NOVEMBER 18TH - BARBECUE

Once again, Ken and Betty Orren were kind enough to make available their Healesville home for our barbecue. Despite occasionally threatening clouds, the weather remained fine throughout, and when the sun broke through, it was actually quite warm. Around 50 members turned up and enjoyed chops, sausages (thanks Frank) and buttered rolls. Thanks Betty, Thel and all the ladies who helped to make this a great day.
A highlight of the afternoon was the lucky wheel and a number of members took home Crosby LP's as prizes. Two memorial envelopes featuring Bing were auctioned to one lucky member for the reasonable cost of $12.

MONDAY DECEMBER 3RD - MUSIC EVENING

Although only around twenty members turned up for this, our last function of the year, it was nonetheless, a very successful evening.

Amongst the highlights:

Col Griffin's slides of our February 1979 barbecue featuring such notables as Les Saynor, Geoff Orr, Bill Bennett and Adrian Fowler.

Ken Orren's musical selections featuring such items as 'Old Man River','Remember Me' and 'The very thought of you'.

Bill Bennett's music quiz (thanks Bill)

The draw for the three copies of 'How the West Was Won' (Won by Shirley Naylor, Ken Orren and Girvan Paterson) and the one copy of 'White Christmas' (won by Peter DeRyk)

Stan Sherlock's report of his recent visit to the USA to climb Mt Whitney (better you than me, Stan!) which happened to be on the same day that Skylab fell on West Australia. Being Australian, Stan of course received a lot of attention under the circumstances and used the opportunity to tell a lot of people about our society. Stan also reports that he saw the 15 LP 'Bing's Hollywood' for sale in a record shop at US$40 PER DISC! If you preferred, the store owner would tape the set for you at $10 per disc. (At the risk of showing off, I remember when I purchased most of those discs at John Clements for the discontinued price of $2 each! Those were the days.)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 11TH - FILM EVENING

Our first function for 1980 was a great success with close to 60 members attending, despite the transport strike that day.

Screened were: The musical highlights from the 1942 film musical "The fleets in" which featured a very very young William Holden, a not-the-best print of Bing's 1931 Mack Sennett comedy 'One More Chance' (cont.../8)

The Herald, Sat., Jan. 26, 1980

Now it's Son of Bing

Drama student Harry Crosby with the cast of "The Absolute Monarch."

LONDON. — Harry Crosby, 21-year-old son of Old Groaner Bing has made his English show business debut.

It wasn't in a TV spectacular nor a West End theatre, but in a spartan hall so tiny that it can seat only 150.

Harry wants to follow in his late father's footsteps and has been training very quietly for three years at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

The production in which he and 10 other final-year students appeared in the college's little theatre near Earls Court, is a spectacular celebration of Queen Elizabeth I, with 100 sumptuous and bejewelled costumes and period music and poetry. It is called "The Absolute Monarch."

Harry, who with the rest of the cast has just returned from taking the pageant on a tour of 50 theatres in Holland and Belgium, dresses up in cloak and ruff as Lord Sussex and plays the classical guitar.

He said: "Being a Crosby does open many doors, but they expect a lot from you as well. My name alone won't fill the house. That's why I came here to study drama.

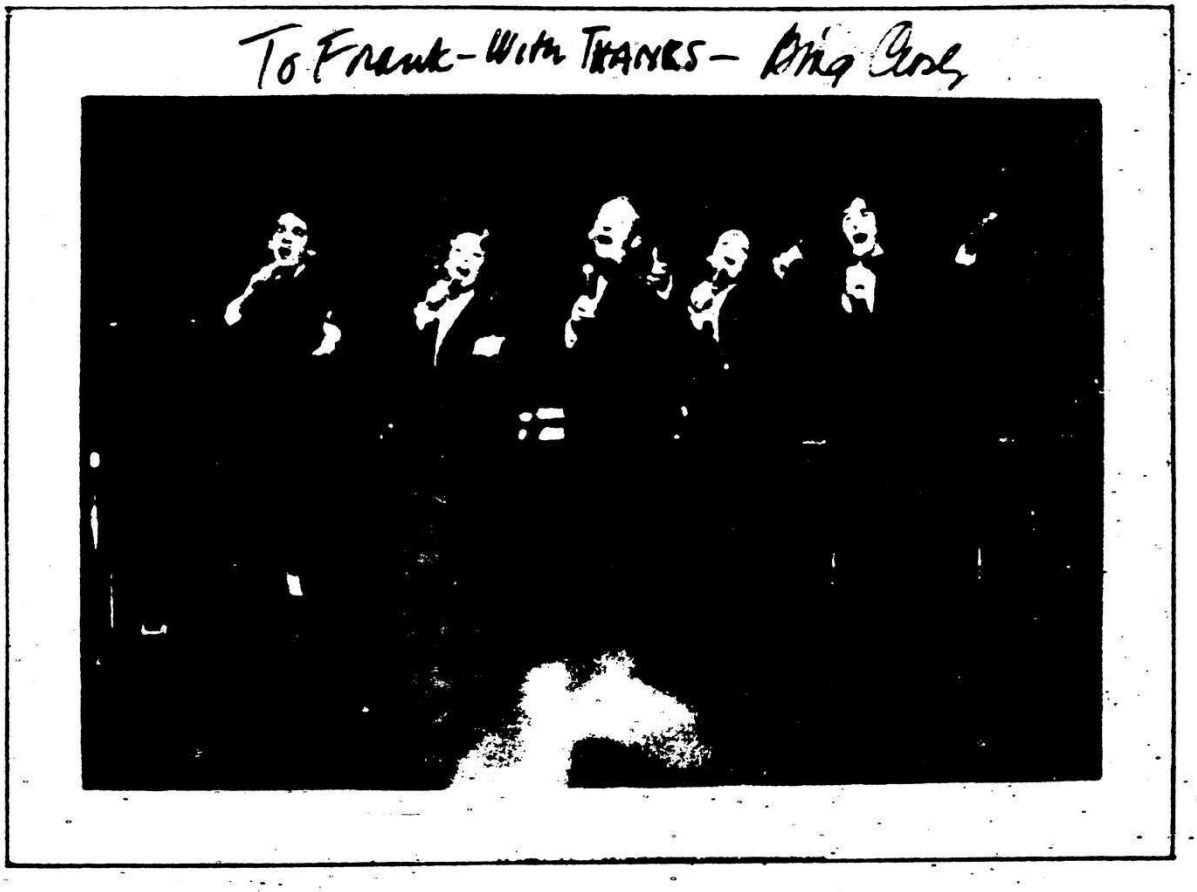
"I could have hung around Los Angeles, hoping for a break but everyone is an actor in L.A. and I didn't want to do that."

While studying in London, Harry has been doing all his own cooking and cleaning in his modest, two-bedroom Kensington flat.

After the pageant finishes he leaves Britain for good.

Harry is the eldest of Bing's children by his second wife, Kathryn Crosby.

Thanks to U.S. member Frank McAllister who supplied us with a copy of this photograph he took at one of Bing's concerts. As you can see, Bing autographed the picture for Frank.



(which even though a little worn, was still most enjoyable), and finally, the feature of the evening: "The Starmaker". The last-named was very well received with the cynical remarks of comedian Ned Sparks drawing great guffaws from certain members of the audience.

In addition to the films, one member offered several dozen Crosby 78's for sale and a number of these were snapped up by collector's present.

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HAVE YOU ANY RECORDS, MAGAZINE, ETC WHICH YOU WISH TO SELL OR EXCHANGE? BRING THEM ALONG TO OUR NEXT FUNCTION AND WE'LL BE HAPPY TO DISPLAY THEM FOR YOU. SIMILARLY, YOU ARE WELCOME TO PLACE ADVERTISEMENTS (WITHOUT CHARGE) IN THIS NEWSLETTER FOR THE SAME MATERIAL.

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THE DENDY BRIGHTON SCREENS 'KING OF JAZZ' - SUNDAY MARCH 30

Always interested in making a few dollars for the Club, we have hired out our print of 'King of Jazz' to the Dendy Brighton for Sunday March 30th. The Dendy are mounting a live band at the same time, so it should be well worth a look see. Actually, it's one of the first time's that the film will have been screened on professional cinema equipment in a big comfortable theatre, so that's another reason to see it again.
Watch for advertisements in your local newspapers around the end of the month.

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FOR SALE - BING'S PHILCO RADIO SHOWS - ON CASSETTE

Possibly the best radio series Bing ever presented was 'Philco Radio Time' 1946-47, 47-48 and 48-49. The series had a top budget, great guests and good writing and co-incided with Bing's years as the top box-office star in America. High-quality cassettes of these shows are now available from:

Jonathan Russell, 10 Roxburgh Rd, Westgate-on-sea, Kent CT8 8RX, England, at a cost of Au$5 per C 60 cassette (which covers two shows and includes surface mail postage.)

For cassettes in bulk or for air mail rates, please write to Jonathan direct. Tapes used are TDK brand which is highly recommended.
Jonathan is happy to supply lists of the 108 Philco shows he has available and would prefer payment in Australian cash.

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NEW MEMBERS

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As is the custom with this newsletter, we like to welcome new members from time to time. The following members have joined in the last few months. Although we are purely a local society, it is gratifying to note the number of people from other countries who feel that they get something out of belonging to our group.

An official welcome to:

Jean Manning, 10 Chislehurst Rd, Hampton 3188
Shirley Naylor, 8 Buna St, Orange, NSW 2800
Shirley Smith, Callington, South Australia 5254 USA
Roger J Hackett, 4232 Herkimer Place, Bronx, NY 10470
Ronald Haymes, 32 Walker Rd, Mt Waverley 3149
Francis Smith, Civil Court of New York, 111 Centre St, New York NY 10013 USA
Jonathan Russell, 10 Roxburgh Rd, Westgate-on-sea, Kent CT8 8RX, England.
Ray Soltan, 5 Terry St, West Heidelberg 3081 Japan
Kyoichi Muneta, 1-19-21 Nakokasaka, Higashi-Osaka 577
Joao Daudt D'Oliveira Neto, Rua General Urquiza 119, Apt 207, Leblon, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.
Peter Traynor, 74 Pampling St, Camp Hill, Brisbane 4152
George McCabe, 4437 Colfax Ave So. Minneapolis Mn 55409 USA
Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Rd, Bangor, Co. Down BT20 5LR, N. Ireland
Robert Smith Jones, 39 Gladstone St, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE 31 2XD England
Cyril Walters, PO Box 606, Broken Hill, NSW 2880
Renee Chester, 48 Milton Rd, Hanwell, London W7, England
Frans Vanderkolff, Top Naeffstraat 8hs, Amsterdam, Neth.
Laurence Davies, 84 May St,Nth Fitzroy 3068
Daniel Keating, 12 Canning St. Nth Melbouren 3051

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LETTER

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(Late last year, we made contact with Ken Barnes, the man who produced several of Bing's last albums. Shortly after, we received this reply which I am sure that you will find of interest. B.M.)

Dear Bob,

I appreciate your comments about Songs of a Lifetime. In all my years in the recording industry, I have never had so many congratulatory letters on any album. It was not an easy project to complete, involving as it did, the marrying up of diverse sound sources. This called for many long hours in the studio. I must give full credit to my good friend, Peter Moore for the great skill and loving care he poured into the arrangements. He always enjoyed working with Bing, as we all did, and I think it shows. We like to think that Bing would have been proud of what has been accomplished here - both artisically and commercially.

Of course, there were times when we thought we had taken on more than we could handle. There was also the fear that maybe it wouldn't be accepted by the fans and critics, but as it turned out, the reception has been uniformly enthusiastic. The letters of praise have been pouring in.

We are planning to issue the poetry readings of September 14th 1977 - but not until the Crosby-Cole-Moore tracks are issued in a boxed set (probably 1981). But there are plans to issue further single albums in the series during 1980. I have no plans to issue out-takes from any of the sessions (from 1975/76/77) as it would simply be too expensive to set up studio time and production costs for something that has little commercial value.

Forthcoming releases - at least here in the UK for 1980 - will include a BING SWINGS package using some of the more exciting up-tempo tracks in the Crosby-Cole-Moore catalogue with, say, a couple of good ballads for contrast. Also I will probably do a compilation album out of the U.A. catalogue featuring some of the most popular tracks from those albums.

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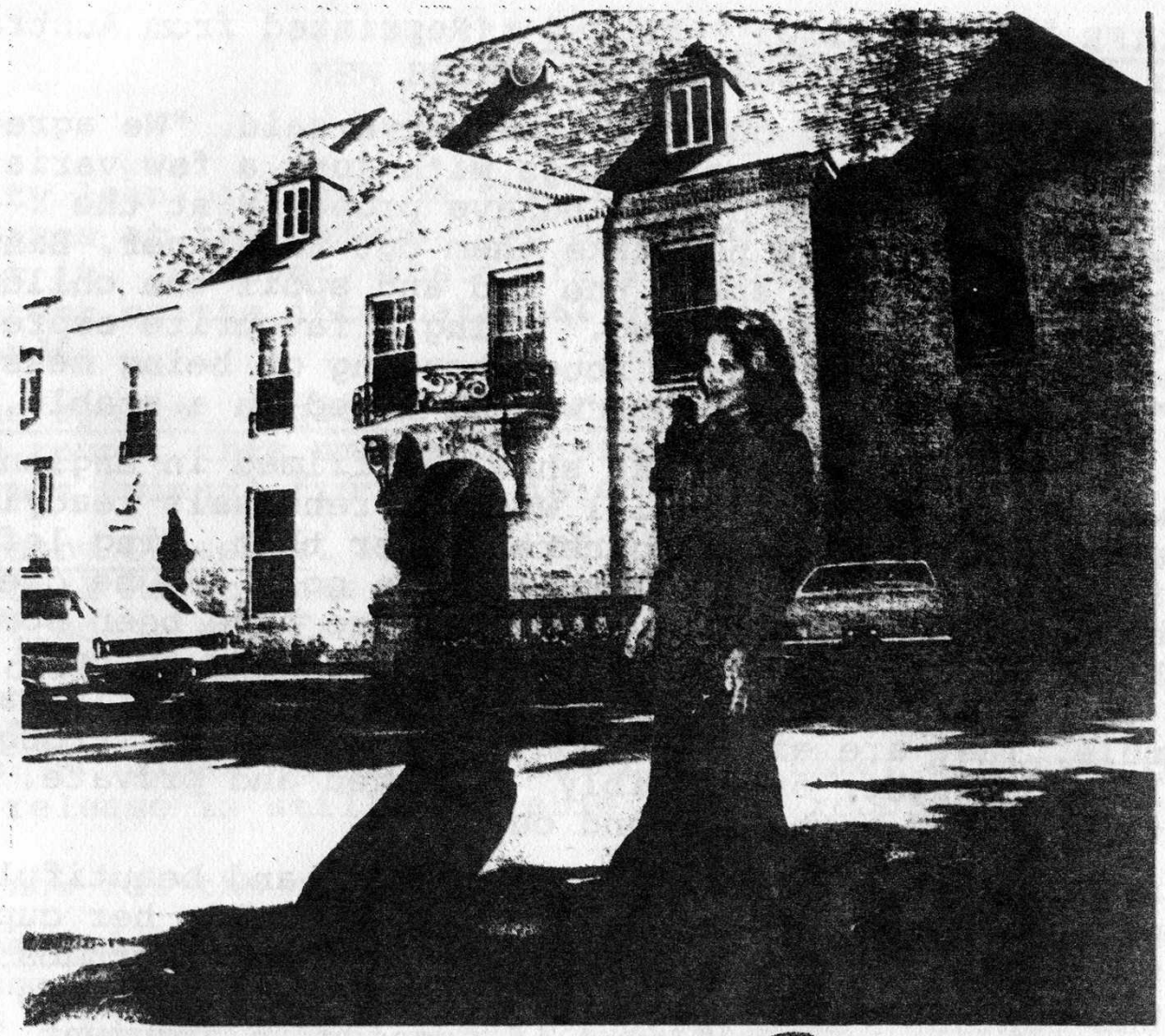

Kathryn Crosby 'My life without Bing'

(SEE NEXT PAGE)

"MY LIFE WITHOUT BING" - Part 2 (Reprinted from Australian Women's Weekly - October 17th, 1979)

"Bing wanted perfect children," Kathryn said. "We agreed completely about a lot of things with just a few variations. If the children didn't behave properly at the dinner table he would not take them out to dinner. Bing believed strongly in spare the rod and spoil the child - as long as I wielded the rod." Bing's favourite espression when the children were rough-housing or being messy, was "Wouldn't it be nice, if we all lived in a stable."

Bing Crosby's last Christmas show was filmed in England, and was followed by a special week of rehersals readying for a two-week Palladium concert. After that, Bing left on a quick trip to Spain to play a little golf and he died there on Friday October 14, 1977. There have been some who have wondered about the Crosby's capacity to cope with grief. At the funeral, composure, not hysteria was the rule. They are either a most courageous and strong family, I thought, or terribly reserved and private. A little bit of both, I found out.

Kathryn Crosby is a charming, delightful and beautiful woman. She is also the kind of woman who holds her cup and saucer just right, would never get biscuit crumbs on the carpet or have her hair out of place. You get the feeling she might say "darn" if pressed in argument. She is formal, reserved and likes the house she lives in, quiet. She is also courageous. She sometimes talks of Bing in the present tense as if he's out-of-town on a business trip and could return home at any instant. Then she'll talk of him in the past tense. Despite the support of friends and family, despite the therapy of work, clearly there have been silent and solitary battles against lonliness and depression.

The awareness that her husband was indeed mortal and frail first hit home to Kathryn on a crisp winter evening in March, 1977. It was the night that Bing Crosby took a terrible fall off the auditorium stage in Pasadena, California, where he was taping a television special celebrating his 50th year in showbusiness. The 73-year-old crooner suffered a fearful battering and Kathryn, who

is a registered nurse, knew just how terrible it was. "My grieving has come in several stages," Kathryn reveals. "Bing died for me when he fell off that stage in Pasadena. He fell 8m on to a hard, concrete floor and he lived. His heroism was so marvellous, I can't tell you how proud I am. But there was no doubt. I knew he was dead. I was not courageous or brave. Frankly, I felt that after that fall, when he not only came back but came back with the height of all his powers, I felt that we could do it forever. Really did. He was going to live forever. He never would have tolerated giving up any of his powers." "Bing was an absolutely wonderful husband," Kathryn declares. "He challenged me to always do my best. There were many times that I assumed he would help me when he didn't. So I had to learn how to cope myself. For example, I work with a group of Immaculate Heart nuns and they were having dinner to salute a man who had done a great deal for San Francisco. I volunteered Bing for Master of Ceremonies. Bing never told me he wouldn't. But he never told me he would be either. Well, the night of the do, Bing told me he was going into San Francisco to do something else. So I was Mistress of Ceremonies. Know something? I did splendidly."

Kathryn appeared at the Royal Variety Show a month after Bing had died. Bing was scheduled to headline the show with Bob Hope but coming so soon after his death, Kathryn was inclined not to go. "But I finally decided to go because Bing felt it was terribly important to support Her Majesty," says Kathryn, her voice trembling as she remembered the waves of applause after Bob Hope introduced her.

It has certainly not been easy for Bing's widow - keeper of his legend and warehouse of Crosby memories. But as Kathryn puffed up some sofa pillows ("my one domestic skill"), she stood by the piano where Bing used to play and said, "I'm thinking about today and quite a lot about yesterday. I have been terribly afraid at times and so dreadfully alone and frightened. But then I come back here to this house and all is well." END.

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Accidents, Marriages and
Scandals With Great Glitter
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WE KNOW
WHO OUR SUBSCRIBERS IS
WE ALSO PRINT
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BINGVILL

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PARIT

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ABE WITHROW RAISED A BIG
SQUASH ON HIS VINE

Bale and His Pants

Bale Hawkins says he has a terrible hard time keepin his pants up on him of late. Ever sinst that young feller from the citty, who boarded with Cy Hoskins went home, Bale has been wearin a belt to keep his pants up jest like the citty chap did, but Bale says he has to wear it so blame tite that it allmost cuts him in two. Bale says he 'lows he will go back to suspenders soon.

Bud Got Lickt

Widow Hinckley give Bud a good lickin one day last week. As everybody knows, Bud ain't quite right in his head, and he got holt of a pail of paint and a brush with wich the widder was painting her flour pots, and Bud he catched the cat and helt it and give it a coat of paint. When Mrs. Hinckley licked Bud you could of heard him holler a mile.

Lost

I went out and lost the stem outen my corncob pipe somers about the first of last week or the last of this week. I don't where I lost it; if I did I wouldn't ask you to find it for me. I'm awful put out, because of this being as I can't smoke and haft to chew. Find it for me please.

HANK DEWBERRY

Bingville.

Jim Building

Jim Peterson, while sinking a clothes line post in his yard last week, struck a rock about 2 feet under the surface, and being as the rock was too big to get out, Jim had to set the post about 3 feet to one side. Jim thinks it would of looked better where he first set it. There is considerable building in our midst this fall.

E BUGLE

BY

NEWTON NEWKIRK

EVERYBODY WANTS SUMTHINK
WHAT IS THE RESULT?
THEY GIT NOTHINK
ADVERTISE IN THE RINGVILLE BUGLE
And See What You Git

Locals

Peter Hoskins went out partridge hunting one day last week and shot a rabbit. Peter is quite a partridge hunter.

Silas Osgood of Hardscrabble visited Ringville last week on business and pleasure and swopt 2 doz. eggs to Hen Weatherby in exchange for groceries. Si does most of his trading here. Come again, Si, we are always glad to see you come and go.

Deacon Butterworth, while giving his testimony in prayer meeting Wensday night let his glasses fall, smashing both glasses. They was his near-by reading spectacles, and he says he don't see how he can get along without em. Mrs. Jake Hance, who set near the Deacon, says that when he let his spectacles fall and saw they was broke he said, "Dang it" in a a soft voice, but we'd hate to think that the Deacon would say a thing like that in church.

Miss Susan Woodbury give our wife a receipt for baking brown bread which tasted real good.

Abe Witherow raised a big squash on his vine which measured two feet from tip to tip. Abe talked some of exhibiting said squash at the Hardscrabble Fair, but didn't. It would of cost him 10 cts. to enter the squash, and Abe said that was more than the squash was worth.

Hi Called

Hi Henderson of Calamity Corners dropt into the Bugle office last week and desired to know why we didn't have into the paper that he had a hearse to die on his hands last spring. We told Hi the reason we didn't say anything about it was that we didn't hear nothing of it. How can we publish the news if we don't hear it, we ask? Hi 'lowed this was a pour reason.

Ken Barbes letter cont. from page 10

This package will be called COME SHARE THE WINE - and will feature the title track which I recorded with Bing at the November, 1976 sessions - which has never been issued. It is a "Those were the days" - type of number which I had originally envisaged as a single. Although Bing gave a good performance - after having virtually only learned it on the studio floor - there were a number of flaws that prevented it from being a top choice. He did only two takes and both were less than acceptable. He told me that he would come back to it "some other time". So we dropped the idea and it was never picked up again.

Recently, however, I listened through the two takes and realised that with some diligent editing - calling for about nine or ten splices from different parts of each performance - a good master tape could be achieved. So if I can find some time before the end of the year, I'll be in the studio and working on the package for, perhaps, a March release.

Speaking of March, that's also the month that my book THE CROSBY YEARS is due to be published. I have just seen the final page proofs and I must say the design is very attractive indeed. I do hope it finds favour with the various Crosby clubs around the world. Certainly, it contains material and photos that have never been published before - and it goes into a somewhat different direction than any other book on Bing. So there you are, it does look as though 1980 will be another active year on the Crosby front.

Once again, many thanks for getting in touch. And please convey my best wishes to all your members.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Barnes.

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Ken's letter was dated October last year, so providing that nothing has gone astray, the LP and book mentioned above should be due out any day now. Let's hope so.

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NEW RECORD RELEASES
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Pretty lean pickings on the local scene regards record releases at the moment. Two or three re-issues and that's about it. However, there are a number of releases of interest on the international scene. First, the local records:

The special Magic of Bing Crosby (yes, again). This time round, this umpteenth reissue of "Bing Sings While Bregmas Swings" from 1956 is on the Rainbow label RDL1533.

Crosby Classics. Rainbow RPG 7506. If you think that 'Special Magic' has turned up often, how about this disc! The tracks, all from 1932-33 have virtually never been out of the catalogues since they were first issued on 78!

Bing and the Andrews Sisters (2 lps) - World Record Club R 06700. A little better this time, although the MCA release is still available in the record shops.

And now for the overseas issues:

Command Performance Victory Extra - Radiola MR-1100, Personality Series No.5. A broadcast from August 15, 1945 - VJ day. Bing, Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Durante and about a zillion other well known personalities.

Sand in my shoes - Connee Boswell MCA MCFM2739. Normally I only list LP's that are all or mostly Bing. But this LP sounds like a must for Connee Boswell fans. Two Bing tracks are featured: Yes Indeed and Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut Street. Are you listening, Les Saynor?

Star Gold - The original Bing Crosby - MCA Coral 0082.060 (Germany) Two LP's featuring 24 of Bing's Decca sides including a handful not usually reissued on LP plus one hitherto unissued take of 'A Gal in Calico'.

Bing's Party - Artistic ART 001 - Produced in the UK, this disc features a selection of material culled from radio shows of the late 40's and early 50's. Good value.

cont.../19

MACK SENNETT

brings to the screen

in

I SURRENDER DEAR"

As great on the screen as he is on the air . . . the new king of radio crooners . . . California's famous discovery who has become the country's reigning favorite overnight—that's Bing Crosby. You'll never forget the thrill of his inimitable rich baritone as he sings his most popular song "I Surrender Dear." Romance, rhythm and rollicking comedy are packed into this picture in glorious gobs.

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The biggest laughs, the fastest action—beauty, comedy and thrills—are always to be had at the theatre showing *Educational Pictures*. So watch for others such as Al Christie's Vanity Comedies; the speedy, peppy Mermaid Comedies; Mack Sennett's Brevities, in natural colors and a host of other sparkling tid-bits of moviedom.

EDUCATIONAL FILM EXCHANGES, Inc.
E. W. HAMMONS, *President*
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Educational Pictures
"THE SPICE OF THE PROGRAM"

BING BOOK

• BING CROSBY

ONE OF the late Bing Crosby's sons, Gary, will reportedly reveal the other side of the late crooner's warm, kind public image in a book planned for next year.

Crosby junior has received a $115,000 advance from his publishers for the 'tell-all' book.

It 'sounds more than reminiscent of Christine Crawford's best-selling book, Mommie Dearest, in which she recounted her frightening childhood with her actress mother, Joan Crawford.

That one will be made into a movie starring Anne Bancroft as Joan Crawford.

New Record Releases, cont. from page 17

Bing Crosby on V-Disc - Dan VC 5018 (Japan). Certainly one of the most interesting LP reissues for a long time. There is a vast amount of material by Bing around on V-Disc and none of it has ever been re-issued on LP before. See page 22 for more information on V-Discs. We are endeavouring to import several copies of this LP to Australia for the members. No promises, but if you drop me a line now asking for your name to be included, when and if the records arrive, we will have a draw for them as we did for 'How the West was won'.

Retrato De Bing Crosby - MCA MAPS 7902 (6758) (Brazil) An interesting Crosby record from the other side of the world featuring 16 tracks from the Decca files. Nothing new in content, but great for label collectors. Drop a line to our Brazillian member Joao Daudt D'Oliveira Neto whose address appears on page 9. Joao is always interested to hear from collectors from around the world.

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NEWS FROM OTHER CROSBY SOCIETIES
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FROM THE CLUB CROSBY - AMERICA

The big news is that after ten years as President and Vice President respectively, Pat Sullivan and Priscilla Koernig have decided to step down. As Pat writes, "Both Priscilla and myself have served in the roles of Vice President and President for a full decade, and the beginning of the 80's seems an appropriate time for us to step down to allow others to assume more important roles in the club. Although the club is not an infant, it will be 43 years old next year, it has always been informally organized. In order to make succession of officers more secure in the future, we have undertaken to form a more formal organization, with a constitution and by-laws as well. I'm sure that I speak for Priscilla as well as myself when I say that our commitment to Bing and to the club is as strong as ever. Leading the club

through both the joys and and sorrows of the 70's will always remain as one of our most rewarding memories."

New President of the Club is well-known US collector Al Sutton, his Vice President is equally well-known collector Herb Bootman and the new Secretary-Treasurer is devoted Crosby man Morton B. Miller.

Please note that the new address for all correspondence is: PO Box 8283, Sacramento, California 95918, USA.

Al would be most interested to hear from you, especially if you have any suggestions as to what you would like to see in the club magazine "Bingang".

Subscription fees are US$8.00 for one year or US $15 for two years. Al hopes to issue possibly three magazines a year.

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FROM THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - TACOMA, USA

A Tribute to Bing in Tacoma.

President of the BCHS, Ken Twiss, writes:
"The second annual tribute to Bing will be something of a three day festival. One evening will be devoted to rare Bing films, some of which have never been seen since they were produced. A bus tour of places associated with Bing and his family in Tacoma will also be part of the proceedings. The highlight of the festival will be a banquet and evening of entertainment featuring well-known personalities!"

For details of the BCHS and the invaluable work it is doing, drop a line to Ken Twiss today. The address:

The Bing Crosby Historical Society
PO Box 8013
Tacoma, Washington 98408,
USA.

Ken is always delighted to hear from admirers of Bing and membership in the Society is open to all.

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FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, U.K.

Reg Bristo, Editor of "Bing" magazine, writes:
"I was pleased to learn of the social activities you are undertaking. It does seem to me there is a tremendous resurgence of interest in Bing all over the world. The ICC, for example, has its largest membership ever with over 1000 members. My warmest regards to you and your members."

Membership in the International Crosby Circle costs the equivalent in our dollars of three pounds for which the member receives 3 - 4 magazines annually. For an extra pound, the magazines are sent by air.

Reg also has for sale the 'mini-discography' which lists all of Bing's records in chronological order. Two pounds.

Please write to: Reg Bristo,
7, Greenmeadow Close
Cwmbran
Gwent NP44 4PJ
United Kingdom.

Whilst on the subject of the ICC, here's an extract from a letter received from Bob Jones of that organization which shows that we are not the only ones who have an active social calendar. Bob writes:

"Enclosed is a menu from our last Crosby event which was held on December 8th. The program consisted of Crosby records played on the disco console followed by the film "Two for tonight" on video projected onto a 5' x 5' screen. After dinner, we used the video equipment again to watch "The Christmas Years". The evening was organized by myself with John Joyce and Sam Warman in the name of the ICC. The event was the 5th since Bing passed away and we have planned to hold similiar functions of May 3rd and October 14th every year as well as other events in-between."

FROM THE BING CROSBY PHOTO CLUB, UK.

Well, actually, we haven't received much mail from the boys in the Photo Club. Drop us a line fellas, and we'll give you a big write up next issue! Until then, write to Frank Murphy, 32 Ferndale Ave, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 7NE. UK.

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COLLECTOR'S CORNER

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V-DISCS

A knowledge of Bing's V-Disc releases is essential to the serious collector and with the release of an LP of V-Disc material in Japan, it seemed timely to feature a few facts about these records on these pages. The material used on V-Discs was assembled by the Armed Forces Special Service and the discs were pressed under government contract by the Victor and Columbia record companies for the sole use of the United States Overseas and Armed forces during World War II. All V-Discs are 12", have an outside start and play at 78rpm. Most were pressed in vinyl although a handful were pressed from shellac.

Many artists donated their services to V-Discs free of charge and material featured was drawn from a variety of sources. Most of the V-Disc material featuring Bing was taken from Kraft Music Hall broadcasts. However, in some cases, the material originated from film sound tracks and in three instances, from commercial masters.

Because no royalties were paid to the artists concerned, all V-Discs were meant to be destroyed at the end of the war. Happily, some did survive although many look (and sound) like they were played with the tip of a bayonet! If you chance across any V-Discs, do pick them up. They are worth money to the serious collector. The quality of the material featured on the Japanese issue is for the moment, unknown. However, this LP will be a welcome addition to most collections.

"LE BING"

Whilst in Paris filming "Little Boy Lost" in 1953, Bing recorded this 10" album of songs sung completely in French. Interestingly, he also recorded many of the same songs in English at about the same time. The original LP unfortunately has long been out of issue, and a little surprisingly perhaps, has never been reissued.

MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Back in the early 50's, it was common practice in the USA to issue new LP records on sets of 45's as well. Bing's Musical Autobiography was no exception and this disc comes from a attractively packaged boxed set containing 15 records. Most of the discs, like this one, contain 3 - 4 tracks per side.

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BITS AND PIECES

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* Sad to note the passing of Jimmy Durante recently. Durante was long a part of the Crosby scene and although the two never appeared together on the screen, Durante was a frequent guest on Bing's radio programmes and later on his television specials.

* Another death, although one that perhaps will not mean much to Australian readers, is that of veteran American radio producer, Burt McMurtrie late last year. McMurtrie knew and worked with Bing in the Whiteman days and actually produced many of his first radio broadcasts. Before his death, Burt was working on a book of his reminisinces. Sadly, that work was never completed.

* NEWS CLIPPINGS. We always need clippings for the photo pages of the magazine. The only newspapers I get time to read are the Age and the Herald so if you see anything in other papers, no matter how small or unimportant it may seem to you, please send it in. The same applies to magazine articles.

* Did you all get to hear the revised final episodes of the 15 part BBC radio series "The Bing Crosby Story" on Sentimental journey recently? The last couple of episodes were very different from the first time that the series was broadcast. I must say that the last episode in particular seemed to have been thrown together in a real hurry - not really up to the high standard of the earlier broadcasts.

* We're sorry to report that our old friend Keith Hyde is not too well these days. Hang in there Keith, we're all pulling for you.

* Also on the sick list is Nevin Walker. Nevin, as many of you will know, runs the Vintage Record Shop in High Street, Prahran and has done so for nearly 20 years. In hospital since around October last year, Nevin is reported to be on the mend and hopes to re-open some time after Easter. Long-time regular customers will welcome that news.

* On page 18, you'll see a clipping that Gary Crosby is writing an 'expose' on what life was like with dad. Although few of us believe that Bing was 'Father O'Mally' in real life, this sounds like one book that we could all do without. After all, there are few of us who would emerge unscathed if some member of our family wrote a book about what we were like in private life, one day!

* Kathryn Crosby Fan Club. As mentioned in an earlier issue of the newsletter, a Kathryn Crosby fan club has been started up in the USA. Fees are $5 per year and the person to write to is: Caroline G. Dawson, 1374 Broadway, Apt 7D, West Somerville, Mass. 02144, USA.

* New LP's at discounts for members. Two record shops now offer discounts to members of the society. Just mention that you're a member when you call into:

The Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Rd, Bentleigh, OR, Cunningham's Record Centre, 80 Church Street, Brighton.

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LETTERS

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From Frans' van de Kolff, Amsterdam

Thank you for sending me a copy of your newsletter. I found it very interesting. Besides the reviews of your regional meetings - what a pity we don't have anything like that here - there's enough which is of interest to overseas members. It's good to see so many Crosby LP's available in your country.

From Cyril Walters, Broken Hill

My collection is quite moderate by specialist standards, but cover Bing's recordings from 1926 to 1977. I once had many more 78's than at present, but moving around the place prevented me from keeping them and as the years rolled on, many were lost, broken, loaned and never returned. However, over the same period, many of those recordings have been reissued on LP's and I now have over

50 LP's. The recent CBS LP's on vintage Crosby have been especially welcomed by me. I suspect that further volumes in this series are still to come (including, possibly an LP of the soundtrack songs from Bing's Mack Sennett comedies. Keep your fingers crossed. BM).

From Leslie Gaylor, Isle of Wight

(To the uninitiated, Leslie Gaylor is possibly the most dedicated Crosby collector in the entire world. Over the years, he did more to boost Bing's career than almost anyone else and in the mid-70's, played a major role in getting Bing back into the recording studios.

Briefly, Ken Barnes has made an initial purchase of 72 of Bing's CBS radio tracks. However, he has also secured the release rights to 235 tracks. Initially, he spent a total of three days listening to all the recordings before selecting those he wanted. Ken doesn't like the organ backing to some numbers but I hope to persuade him to work on some that have piano accompanyment.

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BING CROSBY by Joao Daudt D'Oliveira Neto

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In this article, I intend to do justice to a singer who, in spite of having been recognized for his undeniable artistic talent, has often been, I believe, underrated. I am talking about the Great Bing Crosby - one of the few artists who has a top-ranking position in the musical world.
In classical music we have a Bach, in opera a Caruso, and in popular music, a Bing Crosby. So many qualities and talents are found together in these artists that they automatically stand apart from others.

In the case of Bing Crosby, American popular music was one thing before he appeared and quite different afterwards. An artist is considered superior when he shows three basic aspects: 1) Creative ability 2) A complete command of his art 3) Good taste in choosing a theme. Bing Crosby has these three basic prerequisites and as Duke Ellington once pointed out, "There are very few who are beyond category".

Strange as it may seem, a great artist often undergoes hard and unfair criticism. We believe that such criticisms are due to a lack of perception or knowledge. In the book "The Great American Singers", the author opens his chapter on Bing Crosby by saying that he has never heard an artist so inadequately evaluated. He tries to show that Bing Crosby is a very modest singer as compared to Frank Sinatra, for he lacks 'voice' as well as the 'technical resources' necessary to embellish his work. He also says that Bing had trouble with his top notes because he had a poor voice lacking in range. At the end, the author states that Bing's voice will be remembered as that of a good friend.

I strongly believe that Bing has never been so inadequately judged as in this book. In the first place, Bing was the only singer who was able to give a top note without forcing his natural voice. And it was this quality that was the secret of Bing Crosby. He knew that his voice was naturally a strong one and that he did not have to force it. That quality is unique in the whole history of popular music. From Al Jolson to Tony Bennett, all other singers force their voices when they approach the climax of their song. Very seldom did Bing do this, but we stress that he could do so if required. As example, take his 1945 version of Old Man River plus his later duets with Dorothy Kirsten.

Frank Sinatra is undoubtedly the greatest singer after Bing Crosby. His abilities as a song interpreter are beyond discussion. But what is the differnce then, between Sinatra and Crosby? Sinatra does not have the same beauty of voice as Bing. Sinatra forces his voice more than Crosby. (Sorry Bill, BM).

(Space doesn't permit us to run all of Joaõ's article on Bing but I thought that you would be interested in hearing a viewpoint on Bing from a part of the world you don't normally associate with Crosby. Joaõ's article ends with a quote from the Brazillian newspaper 'O Globo':)

"Apart from the irrevocable passing of years, the good state of preservation of the singer's voice is excellent. Bing Crosby may be considered the greatest of all American singers."

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST - TIME MAGAZINE, APRIL 7, 1941

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The Groaner

Out of Paramount studio last week came some of the most uninhibited, daffy nonsense to hit the U.S. screen since the heyday of Harold Lloyd. It was 'Road to Zanzibar' and its principle assets were two recruits from radio who bounced gaily through its inanities like a pair of playful puppies. For one of them, Bob Hope, it was the tenth film in a new and rapidly rising movie career; for the other, Bing Crosby, a dulcet broken-toned singer who has confounded all the rules of show business for more than ten years, it was his 24th feature-length picture.

'Road to Zanzibar' , part radio, part vaudeville, part lunacy, is not a 100% movie. That is as it should be, for Crosby, its star, is not a 100% movie star. He is a law student who turned to singing as a gag. He has never studied music or voice; yet jobs kept turning up - each a little better than the last. He always falls uphill. Once on a vacation trip to Los Angeles, Bing and his friend from Spokane, Al Rinker, ran out of money. They polished up a couple of tunes, landed a job in a local theatre. Al played the piano and Bing stood by, tapping a cymbal while they harmonized on some speedy ditties like 'Paddlin' Madelin Home' and 'Five foot two'. Paul Whiteman heard them, offered them $150 a week to join his show.

That was Bing's start. From then on he violated the strictest tenets of success. Whiteman let him go because he was lazy. He immediately landed a better job at Los Angeles' Cocoanut Grove - which fired him for disappearing on long weekends. Mack Sennett hired him to act in some movie shorts. Prohibition booze gave him laryngitis and he received a $3,500-a-week radio contract. Like Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Bill Tilden, Bing knows how to please the crowd. That "The Groaner's" voice is America's voice depends upon the fact that Crosby sings every song as though he felt it was the best ever written.

And that's it for this issue.

Bob Mackie